undertake eco-restoration of about 500 hectares per year per ETF battalion which is normally followed by the ETF battalions funded by this Ministry subject to field conditions. Apart from this, a proposal for raising two Infantry Battalions for Assam with a target of 900 ha. per year has been approved and the planting is yet to be started. Two ETF Battalions, one each at Delhi and Himachal Pradesh are operational but are not being funded by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

An amount of Rs. 9.58 crore was reimbursed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in respect of the four ETF Battalions during the year 2007-08. Details are given in the Statement *{See* below).

to (f) A proposal was received from the State Government of Nagland for raising of an ETF Battalion with a treatable area over an extent of 4000 ha. with proposed cost of Rs. 8.60 crores which will be considered subject to their adherence to the guidelines of the ETF, availability of funds and completion of procedural formalities of raising new battalions. In addition, two additional companies each in the existing two ETF Battalions in Uttarakhand are to be funded by the State Government regarding which further information has been sought from Ministry of Defence. The proposals received from Karnataka and Jharkhand were not considered as these were not complete and were not as per norms of ETF. As per the State of Forest Report 2005, the forest cover of the States of Nagaland, Jharkhand, Karnataka and Uttarakhand are 13,719 sq. km. 22,591 sq. km, 35,251 sq. km 24,442 sq. km respectively.

Statement

The details of the forest cover and the funds released in respect of the four Battalions during 2007-08

Unit	State	Forest cover of the State (in Sq. kms.)	Funds released during 2007-08 (in Rs.)	SizeofETF supported by Ministry of Environment and Forests
127 Infantry Battalion (TA) Ecological	Uttarakhand	24442	2,17,49,397/-	2 Companies
128 Infantry Battalion (TA) Ecological	Rajasthan	15850	3,47,69,376/-	3 Companies
129 Infantry Battalion (TA) Ecological	Jammu& Kashmir	21273	1,40,02,457/-	1 Company
130 Infantry Battalion (TA) Ecological	Uttarakhand	24442	2,52,89,412/-	2 Companies

Illegal felling of trees

3282. SHRI KAMALAKHTAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that illegal felling of trees is still continuing in the country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh on a very large scale;

if so, the details thereof, State-wise, with particular reference to UP;

the details of the action taken against the culprits since last 3 years;

whether in this illegal felling, officials of his Ministry are also involved; and

if so, the details alongwith the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) There is no report regarding large scale illegal felling of trees in the country. However, incidences of illicit felling do take place and the action is taken by the respective State/UT Governments.

The State-wise details of incidences of illicit felling for last three years are being collected.

The action against the offender is taken by the respective State Government as per prevailing Rules/Regulations.

and (e) As per the information furnished by the Director (Vigilance), Ministry of Environment and Forests, there is no case of involvement of any official of the Ministry of Environment and Forests in the illegal felling of trees during their tenure in the Ministry.

Rights of the Tribal and Traditional Forest Dwellers

3283. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

in how many States the right of the tribal and traditional forest dwellers has so far been exercised after notification of the concerning Act with effect from 1st January, 2008;

whether those already evicted in different States owing to implication of the existing forest Act be taken into the purview of the present Act; and

whether Government would provide financial help in strengthening the economy of those who have come under operation of this Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The Ministry of Tribal Affairs had written to the State/UT Governments on 11.1.2008 for constituting various Committees under the Act and for initiating necessary action for recognition and vesting of the forest rights in the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers. The State/UT Governments are still in the process of implementing the provisions of the Act. No progress has been reported by the State/UT Governments regarding recognition of forest rights.

As per Section 4(3) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, the recognition and vesting of forest rights under the Act to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers in respect of forest lands and their habitat is subject to the condition that Tribals had occupied forest land before the 13th day of December, 2005 and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers had occupied the land three generations before 13.12.2005.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 does not envisage provision of financial help to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers whose forest rights are recognized under the Act.